176 A Battle Axe from Ḥabbān, Wāḥidī Sultanate, Aden Protectorate.

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Description

The axehead illustrated here is No. 48.1940 in the Cambridge University Museum of Archæology and Ethnology. Into the socket is inserted a thin tough pole of local wood some three feet long; this is retained in position by metal wedges driven into, and splitting the head of, the pole. The surface of the axehead is roughly polished so that, at first sight, it seems almost to be coated with some other metal. On the neck between the blade and socket the smith has signed his name in dots, 'shughl Miḥsin bin 'Awaḍ, the workmanship of Miḥsin son of 'Awaḍ.' There is an ornamental surface patterning of dots and cross-hatching clearly showing in the photograph.

History

This axe was purchased from the retiring Ḳāḍī of Ḥabbān, a native of Mukallā, shortly after leaving Ḥabbān, *en route* for

Fig. 1

'Azzān. It is of Ḥabbānī manufacture, but I was unable to make any special visit to see the local smiths at work and question them further. The Ḳāḍī, however, gave me the interesting information that the axe is the weapon of the city quarters of Ḥabbān, whereas elsewhere in the towns of south-west Arabia the club is the characteristic weapon of the townsfolk who rank below the tribesman. So well established is this fact that a poem says, 'Do not travel along with him whose weapon is his club, though he claim descent from Ḳaḥṭān.'[1] Like other cities the quarters of which, along with their battle cries and ceremonies, I have described elsewhere,[2] Ḥabbān seems to be divided into sections,[3] inhabited in one case largely by Mashā'ikh, and in another by the Jews exclusively—in 1947 at least, for the Jews have now all departed to Palestine or become converts to Islam. The Jews did not, of course, bear arms, and probably took no part at all in local disputes. At the time of my visit to Ḥabbān in late 1947 every man of the arms-bearing classes habitually carried a weapon with him within the town itself, and even the Saiyids wore the djambīyah or dagger.

This is the only occasion upon which I have seen or heard of the axe as a weapon in southern Arabia, though an axe is used for ordinary domestic purposes; the latter is, however, to the best of my recollection, an instrument of simple form, quite different from the battle axe. The very shape of the weapon argues a certain tradition of manufacture, but the axe is never mentioned by the ancient pre-Islamic and early Islamic poets, nor can I remember seeing it mentioned in early prose as a weapon of Arabia.

The (at present) isolated occurrence of this weapon in a country so little altered from antiquity as south Arabia at once poses the question whether it is a local development or an importation from abroad. Where foreign influences are concerned, Mr. G. W. B. Huntingford has disposed of the possibility of an African connexion. I am disinclined to think that there could be any Indian influence, though the Shiblī Mashā'ikh of Ḥabbān may be connected with the family of that name in India. A link with pre-Islamic Persia is possible, as is some connexion with the Aiyūbids or the Ottoman Turks. I have cited elsewhere a tradition that the Wāḥidī Sultans and other dynasties are of Turkish descent.[4] The Ghuzz Turks, for instance, in the year 605 H. (A.D. 1208–9) according to Shanbal's annals of Ḥaḍramawt reached Maifa'ah, and went up to the Wādī Djirdān. On this march they would certainly pass through 'Azzān, which is the capital of the Wāḥidī Sultans today. It is just possible that a group of Turkish mercenaries, with the axe as one of their weapons, might have settled in the area.

The Spear

In the time of W. B. Harris,[5] who travelled from Aden to Ṣan'ā', the spear seems to have been a weapon in general use, and he reproduces many drawings of Arabs armed with it. G. Wyman Bury[6] a little later even had himself photographed in Arab dress carrying a spear. This weapon has now almost entirely disappeared, though I have seen it in the hands of professional poet-beggars. I found two specimens in Wāḥidī territory, now in the Museum. One of these I came upon while rummaging amongst old silver odds and ends awaiting re-smelting, in the *atelier* of a Jewish silversmith; it had been given a serrated edge and was used to saw up larger pieces of silver. This last example is 14 inches long from the tip to the end of the iron haft, and 1¼ inches wide at the broadest part; it seems to have once been connected with its pole by a brass mount. Like the battle axe it has a surface decoration carried out in dots.

The dagger (described by Landberg, with illustrations[7]) is, of course, the principal weapon of south Arabia, and examples collected by Miss Caton-Thompson and myself can be seen in the Museum. One type of handle is peculiar to the Mashā'ikh class.

Other Types of Ironwork

The shopkeepers of Shibām use the Ghuthaimī lock (ḳufl) which has also been described by Landberg with an illustration.[8] An example is in the Museum along with several keys of various patterns. Like the axehead it is inscribed, bearing the words, ''Amal Ghuthaim, the work of Ghuthaim.' In fact 'trade marks' of this sort are not uncommon, and I might mention that Lahej silversmiths usually mark dagger sheaths thus. The lock looks as if it had at one time been coated with copper. It was said to originate from Ṣan'ā', and strangely enough Tarīmīs to whom I showed it seemed unacquainted with metal locks of this pattern. The manufacture of this ingenious locking device is an indication of the high level of the ancient civilization of the Yemen, but I should doubt if it is much manufactured nowadays, and the Museum example at 12 shillings was relatively expensive.

Various other metal implements are manufactured by the Arabs, always, of course, of the menial smith class, in particular

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agricultural instruments, such as ploughshares, etc. A collection of agricultural instruments is a desideratum, and would help to complete the south Arabian section of the Museum.

I have pleasure in acknowledging the courtesy of Dr. G. H. S. Bushnell, who had the photograph made at the Museum and kindly allowed me to reproduce it here.

Notes

[1] C. v. Landberg, *Dialectes . . . Ḥaḍramoût*, Leiden, 1901, p. 57. The word 'travel' implies that the travellers accord each other protection against attack. A man of the menial classes armed with a club would obviously be of little assistance against a tribesman.

[2] *Cf.* 'The Cemeteries of Tarīm,' *Muséon*, Vol. LXII, (Louvain, 1949), and 'The Quarters of Tarīm and their Tanṣūrahs, *Muséon*, Vol. LXIII (1950), p. 277.

[3] Landberg, *Arabica V*, Leiden, 1898, gives an account of these quarters from informants but he did not visit the town. It seems to have been divided into four quarters at that time, one of them the Jewish Quarter. He maintains, however, that there were no smiths. An account of the work of the smiths of Ḥaḍramawt may be found in his *Dialectes* (see note 1 above).

[4] 'Two Tribal Law Cases,' *J. R. Asiat. Soc.*, April, 1951, p. 40.

[5] *A Journey through the Yemen*, London, 1893.

[6] *Land of Uz*, London,' 1911.

[7] *Dialectes . . .*, pp. 362f.

[8] *Dialectes . . .*, p. 85.

Association of Social Anthropologists. *Communicated by Professor M. Gluckman, Honorary Secretary*

177 A meeting of the Association of Social Anthropologists was held at the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford, on Saturday, 3 October, and Sunday, 4 October, 1953; 28 members and 4 guests were present; 6 new members were elected. After a business meeting two papers were read: J. A. Barnes on 'A Post-Colonial Society: Some Theoretical Problems Arising from Field Research in Norway'; M. Gluckman on 'The Paradox of the "Uncertainty" of Legal Concepts and the "Certainty" of Law: Some Problems Arising from the Judicial Process among the Lozi'.

REVIEWS

GENERAL

Race Crossing in Man: The Analysis of Metrical Characters. *By J. C. Trevor. C.U.P., 1953. Pp. iv, 45, portrait, tables, bibliog. Price 12s. 6d.*

178 It is customary to divide living man into populations —often referred to as 'races'—which have been isolated for varying periods, and which now differ in various physical features. At one time, the practice was to classify on the basis of bodily and cranial measurements. In recent years, the tendency has been to use physiological features—*e.g.* the blood groups—whose genetic basis is both simple and known precisely. Recent work has, however, shown that although bodily and cranial measurements may be affected directly by the environment, their complex genetic basis conforms to Mendelian principles. The two approaches to the classification of living men are therefore complementary.

Dr. Trevor's monograph bears on the first of these and gives accounts of some overall bodily dimensions of nine populations, which have resulted from crosses between Europeans on the one hand, and nine non-European groups on the other. He believes that the problem of racial intermixture is of special importance to the anthropologist because '. . . a knowledge of its consequences must be obtained before he can hope to construct his racial genealogies.'

The results of his own researches have been slow in appearing. Measurements of the hybrid populations were, in general, abstracted from the literature, and were analysed between 1936 and 1938. They were compared by means of the statistical techniques then used in the Galton Laboratory, with the corresponding measurements of what are taken to represent the present-day descendants of the parent groups. Dr. Trevor discusses the shortcomings of the data in an introductory section. For instance, the numbers of individuals of each racial stock which took part in the initial crosses are, in general, unknown, and may not have been equal. Furthermore, the number of generations which have elapsed since the initial crosses is indeterminate, and in some instances backcrosses may have occurred. Other technical points such as the compatibility of measurements taken by different workers are examined critically.

The conclusions are simple and clear-cut. First, the mean value of each character of the hybrid population falls between the corresponding mean values of the parental populations, and tends to approach more closely to the mean value of that parental population which made the greater contribution to the initial cross. Second, '. . . the populations derived from the crossing of distinct racial stocks are not distinguished by a particularly marked degree of variation.' Third, the distribution of characters in a hybrid population of this sort does not show '. . . any clear departure from the symmetrical and unimodal type.'

There can be no doubt that analyses of this type are of importance to the general study of human evolution. It is to be hoped that in some future publication Dr. Trevor will embark upon a discussion of the broad biological problems which his results raise.

E. H. ASHTON

Umriss der Rassenkunde des Menschen in geschichtlicher Zeit. *By Bertil Lundman. Copenhagen (Munksgaard), 1952. Pp. 116, 30 diagrams. Price 12 Danish Kr.*

179 This book, which is intended for students and general readers interested in anthropology, is a synopsis of the races of mankind and also gives an insight into the history and formation of races. The racial classification is mainly based on that of Cuvier and Deniker, and the taxonomy is the same as von Eickstedt's with a few exceptions where the author uses his own. In the interpretation of races only those which can be traced back to precolumbian time are regarded as true races, all later formations of new types of man being specified as mixed races. It may be felt difficult to draw the line between true and mixed races, because, as the author himself states, all races are to some extent mixed.

I have noticed one error of fact; the author refers to alleles as parts of the same gene (pp. 14, 22), instead of genes capable of occupying the same locus in members of a chromosome pair.

It is a pity that the author had to omit all race pictures on account of printing cost, but this is made up for by 30 diagrams illustrating the distribution of the main racial factors and races over the world. Most of these excellent maps are drawn by Dr. Lundman himself and they form the most valuable part of the book, by which the reader at a glance is presented with the main features of races, but on the other hand this system is beset with the dangers of over-simplification, so that the reader will not always perceive the many and often important exceptions from the apparent rule of distribution.

There is a useful bibliography for those who are interested in further studies of physical anthropology. JON STEFFENSEN

Races mélanodermes et leucodermes: Pigmentation et Fonctionnement cortico-surrénalien. *By Jeanne Leschi. Paris (Masson), 1952. Pp. 109*

180 Ever since hormones were first discovered, there has been continual discussion of the ways in which differences in endocrine function might underlie some of the physical differences between the races of mankind. Of these the connexion between melanin pigmentation of the skin and the adrenal gland provides probably the most obvious suggestion of a hormonal basis for an important anthropological character. This suggestion comes from Addison's Disease

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